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## Possibilities of the Modern Home

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# THE IOWA HOMEMAKER

"A Magazine for Homemakers from a Homemakers' School"

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NUMBER 8

## Possibilities of the Modern Home

By D. S. JEFERS

Associate Professor of Forestry.

IN the beginning, the Christ ideal for the home must prevail. He said that the founding of a home is not an experiment, not a joke, but it is to last forever, "What God hath joined let no man put asunder."

The modern home cannot expect to be stimulating and satisfying to the individuals within it unless it is founded upon love, in the highest conception of God, what He does and can do in the individual life. One of the finest remembrances that a man or woman may have is that the courtship days, previous to marriage, were carried on in the very shadow of the church. I am positive, from my observations, that the ideals which are expressed in the modern home find their roots in the ideals which the man and woman had prior to the time of combining their hopes and ideals in the home. I look forward to the time when the majority of our American homes will find their sanction in the approval of the church.

The American home cannot be stimulating and satisfying to the individuals who combine their efforts to make that home unless the foundation is based upon a real partnership of love. It is not a question of getting married. It is not a question of emotion. It is a question of a desire upon the part of each individual to share with the other individual the very great responsibilities of establishing a home. It is not a question of "you buy the food and I will cook the meals;" nor is it a question of "you fire the furnace and I will sweep the floor." I cannot conceive of the American home being satisfying or stimulating if it is based upon that ideal.

After the home has been agreed upon, it should come first. I was very much challenged the other day by the statement of one of the bankers in this town. In speaking of an engagement, he said, "My bank must come first." In truth, his home should come first. It should come first in the thought of the girl, the woman, the boy, the man. The interests of all are merged. I realize that custom and society or whatever agencies you may count make certain demands upon the home. Civilization has come to think of certain types of work as distinctly belonging to man or

belonging to woman. Monday I listened while a member of the faculty very emphatically laid down the dictum that man has better judgment than woman—man has a keener artistic sense than woman—man can cook better than woman—and he called forth a number of examples to support his belief. Who are the masters of the ages? Man. Who plans woman's fashions? Man. Who are the chefs in the large hotels? Man.

Every civilization creates certain positions for man and for woman and endeavors to limit their field of activity. You know that all civilizations have been gauged by the positions given to their women. Thus has civilization advanced. The European men believe that men in the United States are slaves of the women here. Probably they are, but I see no reason for viewing such a situation with alarm so long as woman continues to hold the high position which she fills today.

Possibly the next century may find a three day week for men and a three day week for women. Woman will spend half of the week earning money, as will her husband, and the remainder of the week they will spend together for the home. I am saying these things with the idea of challenging your thought. It seems to me that the twentieth century, if it is to challenge and stimulate the members of the home, must make it possible for every member to have a share in the home duties.

We accept the dictates of civilization. Man, in our day, earns the living. Woman organizes the home. Quite naturally we have come to look upon the home as woman's domain. I am glad that we are gradually moving away from that attitude. The home is not woman's domain exclusively. Probably you have seen the comments with reference to the course for prospective brides which is being offered in an eastern school. The prospective brides are urged to be "orderly but not neat about the home." Neatness means that you insist that the husband shall not scatter his cigar ashes on the floor. Orderliness means that you insist that he shall always hang up his hat and coat. A certain amount of orderliness is essential, but not neatness.

Now, if the home is not woman's domain exclusively, neither is it the exclusive domain of man. It can be exclusively the domain of no one. There are homes organized upon such a basis that when father is gone there is a sigh of relief; the play of the children takes on a different atmosphere. That is vitally wrong. Granted that father has had a busy day in the office, that he has been tried by change in the prices of stocks. It has been this problem and that problem. Often when he comes home he expects everything to wait upon him. Rather, should he not take up the responsibilities where he left them in the morning? He is coming into an organization where he agreed to share responsibilities. It is his duty and his privilege to share them.

Recently I was an observer of a most stimulating and satisfying scene. A faculty member had just driven up to the front door at noon. He is a busy man and has but a few minutes for lunch, but that father had the time to satisfy the insistent demand of a young son who wanted a toy repaired. He might have said, "I will fix it this evening," but instead he stopped to fix the toy right then. Suppose he is late to business. What difference does it make? I should infer that the home comes first in this man's mind.

Another scene, quite the opposite, was in the home where the boy was so shy of his father that he asked mother to ask father for a dime to buy a piece of equipment for school. Each case portrays an attitude of the father toward the home in which he agreed to share responsibilities.

If the home is to be stimulating to the individuals in the home, they must merge their ideals. They must make a reality of all the ideals they have. In Ames there is a family of five members, and so far as I am able to see, that family comes very near to making a reality of the hopes of each individual. Talent dominates in that home. Every member of the family plays a musical instrument. They take part in church programs. Their common interest binds them together.

Last night, after I had left a meet-

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## Possibilities of the Modern Home

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ing, I stood out of doors and listened for an hour to a young married man while he told me of the tragedies of his life. One of the first things that he pointed out was, "She likes society and I don't." "She wanted a fancy car and all I could buy was a ratty Ford." This home might have been all that a twentieth century home should be. Yet they had not talked over frankly and faced squarely their hopes and ideals. I have known another case where a man in the Forest Service was fond of out-door life and his wife did not care a snap of her finger for it. In many other cases such as these, homes are broken up because husband and wife have not merged their ideals, their hopes and their aspirations.

In the finest type of home, the idea of possession is entirely lost. I always smile when I hear, "If my wife does so and so, I will do so and so." I wonder who gave the man his wife, who gave him his possession or how much he has paid for her. There is no reason for anything of that sort that I can see. If individuals merge hopes, ideals and aspirations, it is not "mine" or "thine," but "ours".

Now, if the home has progressed this far, it seems to me that in it there must be a duty for each individual. The home is most stimulating when every

member makes some contribution to it out of the desire they have to make their home the place that it should be. I remember that some man has said that the apron was a badge of servitude. There hangs on the wall in a certain room in my father's house, an apron. That apron was put around my neck or my brother's as we helped with the dishes. Today, as men, when my brother or I go home, that same apron is put around our necks as we help mother with the work about the house. You may think that the apron is made of very good material to have lasted so long. I know nothing about the material and I do not know how many aprons we wore out as youngsters, but this one is still there. When that home is broken up, my brother and I will want that apron because of what it stands for and what is back of it. Is it significant of the atmosphere of the home in which I was reared. Of course, if there had been five or six girls and only one boy in the family, the boy might not have worn the apron. In that case, he would have missed something. He would not have been able to make quite the contribution to his own home that he might have made. He would not have felt so keenly that he had responsibilities in that home. I was reared to look upon kitchen work as my job just as much as carrying in the kindling, shoveling snow and doing many other such things.

At the same time, it is just as important that the girl in the ideal home appreciates the work which is done out-of-doors. If she does not understand or appreciate the problems and the troubles of the out-of-doors, she can never make the contribution to the home that she should make. One of the most satisfying and stimulating things to me now is to visit my home and to find my father and mother sharing in every individual duty and responsibility that the day may bring. Father is feeding the chickens while mother is getting the meal. If he is thru first, he does not wait to come in until the meal is ready, but instead is eager to help. If there is any break in the regular routine, the necessary things of the day are accomplished because each one shares in every responsibility of the home.

I have been using the superlative right along. I should have kept it for this last. The most stimulating and the most satisfying thing about the American home is that each individual is searching continually for the thing which they are not expected to do, and doing it. That is, you are not expected, men, to pick up things around the house. Well, do it sometime. You are not expected to go into the bathroom and clean up the fixtures. Do it sometime. You are not expected to pick up the children's playthings. Do it. Noth-

ing brings quite so much satisfaction as doing those things which are not expected of you.

In Wyoming there lives a cattle man that I know who has been very successful in business. Fortunately or otherwise, he has a wife who is willing to absolutely run their home. One of the most comical things that I have known was that when they went on a trip of several weeks or even a few days, the husband was told, "Now you be at the depot at a certain time. We are going to catch a certain train." Then his wife got out his clothes, his clean linen, all of the shoes he would need, took care of the children, the packing, the buying of the tickets and the checking of the luggage. All that father had to do was to be there. I had never dreamed of such a situation in a modern home. I have discovered since then that there are many situations where all that father has to do is to look after his own dear self and often he can not do that without assistance.

A certain boy came to this college a year ago. He had had the misfortune to be reared in a home with three maiden aunts and his mother. The poor boy failed for three quarters to make his hours because he couldn't take care of himself. Can you boys imagine having clean linen laid out every day for you when you were in high school? This boy had such care. Now when he starts out to play tennis or football there is nobody to wait on him. Girls! Don't wait on your husbands! Men! Don't wait on your wives! I know of a home where there are three boys in the family and one girl. When I visited there it was the boys who served the dinner, although you would naturally expect that the girl would be the one to do such work. Mother was watching, of course, but the boys did the work. The form or service may not have been absolutely perfect, but we enjoyed the meal. I imagine that those boys will not have to be cared for when they go on a trip.

If the modern home is to be stimulating and satisfying, there must very soon be gathered into its program the interests of the children. Well do I remember when I had spent my first year in college and came home with all the fresh slang. Naturally, I made much of it and I was very much surprised to hear mother at once adopt the slang phrases. That was with malice aforethought. I was proud of mother, for she was up-to-date. Today, if the boys come home, bringing new slang, mother uses it, but she is just as keen in English as she was in high school. Many homes are not organized in this way, but I hold it as an ideal and think that men and women should strive for it.

\* \* \* \* \*

The establishment of Dad's day on

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the campus is a fine thing. I recall the first football game that my father attended. My brother was playing on the high school team. Father went to see him. He was not concerned with rules nor scores, but "Where's my boy?" After every scrimmage, "Where's the boy?" He was interested in football for all time. Thus, the interests of the children may well find a place in the program of the home.

May I state very frankly my own ideas about this problem, that unless the home is organized to include children in it, we can never reach any very high place? In a home where there are no children, the spirit of that home should reach out to those little ones who have no parents and it should make that home shelter those fatherless and motherless children. I have not the words to fittingly express my feeling with reference to the man or woman who wastes his affection upon an animal with four legs and a tail and whose sole bit of self expression is "Bow Wow". I think that it is a terrible criticism upon the home that is so organized. I recall a time, just after I had left college when I went west and met a man who told me of his courtship days. "Before we were married, we talked over the whole program of the home which we would build," he said. "We knew what we were going to do; how we would handle finances. We wouldn't buy this or that until we could afford it. We counselled about everything. We talked over our club and lodge relationships. We each knew how the other stood as members of society. We talked about buying a home. We talked about my work and the time it would take. Even the amount of travel that we would do was planned." It was my privilege to live in that home and I found it ideal.

I hope that upon this campus and upon others, college men and women will meet together and fairly and squarely face the problems of the home; that they will bring together all of their notions and ideas, ideals and conceptions, whatever they may be. I hope that having brought them together they may merge them in one discussion together in class rooms. I have great hopes for the stimulating and satisfying home of the twentieth century.

Clarice Iles, who was graduated from the Home Economics Division of Iowa State College in 1924, is a dietitian at the Broadlawns Hospital in Des Moines. She writes, "Diet work here consists mainly of a high protein diet, with basic and smooth diets in special cases. I feel that I am gaining some valuable experience in buying and cost accounting, the buying for all the Polk County hospitals being taken care of from this department."

## CORRECTION

The foods and nutrition article, "Have You Analyzed Your Headache?" which appeared in last month's *Homemaker*, was written by Mary Louise Buchanan.

## The Food Value of Milk

(Continued from page 5)

do not like milk—there is so much poor milk on the market."

The responsibilities of the homemaker do not end with the selection of clean, wholesome milk. A great deal of good milk is spoiled after it gets into the home. Perhaps I should modify the foregoing statement by saying, a great deal of milk is spoiled on the doorstep of the home. Have you ever passed down your street in the middle of the morning and seen the family milk bottles and the family cat or puppy enjoying the sunshine on the front steps together? We will eliminate the family pets from the discussion by granting the sunshine is good for them. In the case of the milk the situation is slightly different. With the rise in temperature resulting, the bacteria multiply rapidly, and even if no harmful pathogenic bacteria are present and no serious trouble follows, it is annoying to find that the baby has developed a "tummy-ache" or that the milk we planned to use for dinner at night is sour.

Unless your milkman has regular hours and you know just when to expect him, have him ring the doorbell, and take the milk in immediately and put it in a cool place. Wash off the milk bottles before putting them away—it saves time later. And always be sure to wash the top carefully—maybe if milk bottles had handles it would not be so convenient to carry them with the fingers over the top.

If the family or some one member of it doesn't like milk, maybe it would be best to try to find out why they do not. Often it is because mother and father do not drink it, or drink it with facial or verbal protest. It is proved daily that babies will take cod liver oil and like it, if the one administering it can say with tones of sincerity—and a feeling of hypocrisy—"Mm! Isn't it good!" How much more easy should it be to stimulate an interest in milk.

The family attitude sometimes has to be remade in order that the children will like milk. Sometimes interest must be stimulated artificially. Try giving it to the reluctant child in an unusual cup or a cup with his initial on it, or in a glass with a straw. Never cultivate distaste for milk by giving something a child does not like in a glass of milk. If a child does not like spinach juice, do not cause the dislike to be associated also with

milk by mixing the two. Sometimes the neighbor's child who has been more fortunate in his introduction to milk, or his natural inclination for milk, will unconsciously create an interest by his hearty cooperation in the disappearance of the milk quota if he is invited over to luncheon or dinner.

My memory fails me in an attempt to give all the details of a successful attempt to stimulate interest in milk.

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